



SCHOOLS ONLINE

Global Connections and Exchange

Afghanistan

October 2006

Each month, we publish a newsletter like this one to update schools in our network, our donors and other interested readers about the activities and progress taking place within our program in Afghanistan.

Do you have something you would like to add to the newsletter?

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Connecting Students Online

The goal of the Global Connections and Exchange Program in Afghanistan is to develop cross-cultural understanding, personal ties, institutional linkages and educational collaboration between Afghan and American students, as well as with ethnic Tajik and Pashtun teachers within Afghanistan. The program also aims to improve civic education and community participation among teachers and students.

Relief International - Schools Online is excited to announce that the forum is now online. Student collaborative projects are posted each month on our Web sites and students are able to discuss what they learned and any questions raised by the project with one another through the forum. Visit our Web site for more information and see what our students have accomplished!



Students interact in a roundtable discussion during a Gender Training workshop.

www.connect-afghanistan.org

New Rotary School Now Online

Training Sessions begin at the Rotary School in Jalalabad

This month the GCEP partner school in Jalalabad, the Najand Dihad middle school, better known as the Rotary school, went online. Relief International - Schools Online has worked in partnership with the Loyola Golden Triangle Rotary Club of San Diego to establish the school and connect the students and teachers to the Internet. The school building was funded by Rotary, and Rotary continues to support the school by recruiting additional female teachers and furnishing the school with supplies for a computer lab and science labs.

With the computer labs in place, RI-SOL is now able to connect the students to a world of opportunities. Staff at the Rotary school have embarked on the first step of the GCEP



Female students participate in ICT training sessions at the new Rotary school.

program by training students in basic ICT skills. The first class of teachers and students started on a 10-week ICT training program, with classes held twice a week. The training sessions began on October 29th with ten teachers, six male students and four female students attending.

By training an initial 10 teachers at the Rotary school in basic ICT skills, RI-SOL is able to dramatically increase the impact the program will have on students. The students and teachers will soon be prepared to connect with other schools globally through RI-SOL's collaborative projects and online forums. We look forward to sharing all that these remarkable students accomplish in the near future.

Fast Facts about the Rotary School in Jalalabad

The Jalalabad Rotary School has:

- 3000 students:
 - 1000 female students
 - 2000 male students
- 17 male teachers
- 2 female teachers
- 8 Pentium4 computers with Internet access
- Printer
- Photocopy machine
- Digital camera
- Laptop computer
- Multimedia projector



Students take an active role in discussion during the start of training sessions at the new Rotary School in Jalalabad.



International Education Week

By Students of the Takhar ILC, Afghanistan

International Education Week began in the year 2000. Now in its sixth year, IEW has become a global event. During the week, students, educators and community leaders work in cooperation with local embassies to recognize and celebrate the benefits of incorporating international awareness in classrooms.

As a part of the International Education Week, taking place this year from November 13th - 17th, we are pleased to recognize the significant steps taken towards a global education by current and former participants of the Afghanistan Education

Department and the Afghanistan government. Afghanistan was only recently able to participate in IEW with new freedoms in education and information opened for us.

As students, we will celebrate this week with great enthusiasm as an opportunity to inform people in Afghanistan and throughout the world about the importance of education. We hope to use this week as a way to connect with people around the world for educational development in Afghanistan.

Far Reaching Impact

A Professor's Insight into the Significance of GCEP

At the Kabul Teacher Training College not only students participate in ILC activities, but professors have shown an interest in upgrading their skills and gaining ICT knowledge as well. Some professors attend classes alongside the pre-service teachers they instruct. While professors are in charge in their own classrooms, they are happy to have their students help them during ICT lessons. Dr. Nasir Ahmad Ajabi, who teaches at the TTC, even attended the gender training workshops. This is what he has to say about this new component of the Afghanistan GCEP program:

I am convinced that there is a new life for Afghan society. How? Before when I was a student I could do basic jobs, but to do something important in my life was not a possibility for me. Now I am a teacher who can speak five languages, which is the result of the effort I have put into courses such as the one I am now following.

These opportunities opened to us when a new light started to shine on our lives in Afghanistan. This happened when we elected our government and chose our president. It brought a new life for the people of our country who had accepted miseries and a variety of problems.

Our cooperation with people from foreign countries isn't an easy matter for us, but it is a new bridge on the river which would otherwise be much more difficult to pass. By Relief International - Schools Online starting these

courses for the next generation of our country, we have a new hope which we had lost before. Of particular importance for Afghanistan is the gender training, which is a way for us to enter

"It is a key which opens the door to the development and advancement of our community."

the social, cultural, political and developed world. In the gender training we can exchange our views and ideas about different social issues with women, girls, boys and men and we can work together to find solutions. We can get information about improvement and advances that

we want to have in our life and pave a new way for us and our family, and our people's future life.

I cannot emphasize enough what a key issue this course is for the people of Afghanistan. But to cut my long story short: It is a key which opens the doors to the development and advancement of our community.

By Dr. Nasir Ahmad Ajabi

First Youth Leadership Club Meets

GCEP provides the opportunity for youth to develop leadership and social activism skills

Youth Leadership Clubs (YLC) provide participants in the GCEP program with an outlet to take the skills developed through training sessions and put them into action. The clubs aim to solve problems in their local communities and educate others about issues of particular importance to Afghanistan's development.

The first Youth Leadership Club in Jalalabad has held a formative meeting that set the group in motion to make great strides in the future. A group of 10 committed participants formed the structure of their organization and elected a leader, treasurer and secretary. The leader was selected based on a majority vote and shall be responsible for compiling monthly reports detailing the activities undertaken by the group. These reports will help RI-SOL to follow the success of the group and contribute to their activities constructively.



Members of the Jalalabad YLC vote to elect a leader, treasurer and secretary.

The YLC's primary goals are:

- To learn about the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals and how these apply to Afghanistan.
- To develop the capability of YLC members to improve their communities and schools through a better understanding of the MDGs and activities focused on the MDGs.
- To develop and/or enhance personal and leadership skills.
- To network ideas and activities with all students and raise awareness of the importance of critical thinking and civil activism.



The first Youth Leadership Club meeting was incredibly successful, drawing interest from many of our GCEP participants.



Students Introduce Themselves: Meet Rabia

“We have finally been given a chance to make our dreams come true.”

My name is Rabia and I am 22 years old. I am a student of the Teacher Training College Saayid Jamaldeen in Kabul, Afghanistan and am in grade 14. I am also a member of the Youth Leadership Club and the Gender Club here in Kabul.

I have learned many things since I joined these two clubs. I am very satisfied with the instructors; they help students in computer classes and provide a great deal of encouragement to YLC and gender club members. Their work is a great service to the people of Afghanistan. I cannot speak for everyone at the ILC, but personally I am incredibly happy with their teaching methods and appreciate all of the hard work they put in.

Before I began my training, I didn't know how to use the Internet. Today I am very happy because we have finally been given a chance to make our dreams come true and to continue our education. During the control of the Taliban, we didn't have this opportunity or the right to continue our education.

October Lesson Plan “Who Am I?”

October was a month for GCEP students to share information about themselves with their partner schools in different countries. The theme of the online collaborative project was “Who am I?” With initial introductions made during the September project, this provided an opportunity for students to begin the process of understanding each other's cultures more deeply.

Students worked in teams to create PowerPoint presentations and Word documents sharing information about their family, cultural origins, hobbies and more. The submitted projects were displayed online and students signed up to the online forum to learn more about one another. The initial response to these projects has been very positive and we look forward to next month's project.



Students used the Internet to find images describing their identity and created presentations.



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